

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 99-375

APRIL 5, 2000

HIGHLAND WATER COMPANY
Request for Waiver of Chapter 62 § 2(E)

ORDER

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

We grant the Highland Water Company (Company) an exception to Chapter 62, §2(E) of the Commission's Rules. The exception permits the Company to place its water system in service later than May 1st each year if temperatures are expected to fall below 32°F. The system must be placed in service no later than the Wednesday preceding Memorial Day.

II. BACKGROUND

The Highland Water Company is a small seasonal water system that served approximately 17 customers in 1999. Most of the system's pipes are laid on the surface of the ground on a west facing slope and are subject to freezing when temperatures fall below 32°F. A significant amount of the piping is ¾" diameter pipe in which the water tends to freeze more quickly than in larger diameter pipes. Because the pipes are laid on top of uneven ground, it is necessary to use compressed air to force the water out of the pipes when the system is drained in preparation for cold weather at the end of the season.

On June 7, 1999, the Company filed a request for an exemption from Chapter 62, § 2(E) which requires that seasonal water service be provided no later than May 1 each year. The Company originally requested that it be allowed to provide service from May 29 to October 1 each year. Walter Lawrence, agent for the Company, indicated during a February 29, 2000 telephone conversation with Raymond Hammond, of the Commission Staff, that the Company would begin service as early as possible without danger of freezing the pipes. He agreed that it would be reasonable for the Commission to require the Company to provide seasonal service beginning no later than the Wednesday before Memorial Day.

III. DISCUSSION

The Greenville area frequently experiences the spring thaw later than other areas of the State. The Company's concerns that the water in its pipelines will freeze, if the system is placed in service on May 1st as required by Chapter 62, are valid during some years. In other years, the system can be placed in service without fear of freezing. We will permit the Company to place its system in service later than May 1st if day or night-time temperatures are expected to fall below 32°F. The system shall be

placed in service as close to May 1st as possible each year, but no later than the Wednesday preceding Memorial Day.

Accordingly, we

O R D E R

1. that the Highland Water Company is granted an exception to Chapter 62, §2(E) of the Commission's Rules;
2. that the Highland Water Company shall place its system in service by May 1st each year unless it reasonably expects temperatures to fall below 32°F;
3. that the Highland Water Company, if it has delayed placing its system in service, shall place the system in service as soon as it reasonably expects temperatures to remain above freezing;
4. that the Highland Water Company shall always have its system in service on or before the Wednesday preceding Memorial Day; and
5. that the Highland water Company shall file a revision to its Terms and Conditions to incorporate the above change to its seasonal service.

Dated at Augusta, Maine this day of April 5, 2000.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
Nugent
Diamond

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